THE
Heavenly Messenger:
OR, THE
CHILD'S plain PATH-WAY to
Eternal LIFE.

You that are Parents far and near,
Bestow one Halfpenny on your Children dear,
That they may understand the Laws of God,
And walk the righteous paths the Saints have trod.
For if they practice, and keep it in mind,
What they within this little Book will find;
That may be done with very little pain,
Which will be for their everlasting Gain.

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The Heavenly Meſſenger, &c.

MR. James Worthy, living in the city of Norwich, in the county of Norfolk, was a gentleman of very good eſtate and in great eſteem for his piety and charity; his whole delight being in the ſervice of God. and doing good to his neighbours, eſpecially thoſe that were poor; none ever asked him any thing, that was truly needy, but he ſupplied their wants; neither was he ſevere to, or oppreſſed his poor tenants, but on the contrary he would often forgive them their rent, and help them in their neceſſities. ſo that they were enabled to overcome their hardſhips and poverty, and to live well in the world; ſo that every one thought himſelf happy if he could get into any part of his eſtate to live, as if they were ſure to proſper.

This gentleman married a very virtuous gentlewoman, the daughter of Mr Thomas Lovely, a very honeſt gentleman in that neighbourhood; by whom it pleaſed God to give him twelve ſons, and he had them baptized after the names of Jacob's twelve ſons; but it pleaſed God to take them all to himſelf except Benjamin, his youngeſt ſon, whoſe birth was the death of his mother, to the great grief of his father.

This Mr Worthy taking his child to church with him one Sunday in June laſt, the Parſon took his text out of Eccleſ. chap. xii. ver. 1.

Remember

Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, &c. Sermon being ended, Mr Worthy took his ſon by the hand, and leading him through the church-yard, he happened to caſt his eyes upon the grave where his wife and eleven ſons lay, which ſtruck ſuch a damp on his ſpirits that he went home in a very melancholy condition; and being returned to his houſe, he leaned with his elbow on a table, with his hand to his head, with tears guſhing from his eyes, he was very mournful; but at length concluding his grief, he uttered theſe words, 'Well I ſhall go to them but they ſhall not come to me.' Now this child Benjamin, though but ſix years old, ſeeing his father in a ſorrowful condition, came to him, with tears in his eyes, ſaying, pray father tell me the meaning of theſe words, I ſhall go to them, but they ſhall not come to me?

This queſtion much ſurpriſed the father, it coming from a child ſo young; and being willing to reſolve him, made him this reply, My dear child, becauſe thy mother and brethren being dead their bodies are turned to duſt, and their ſouls are gone to heaven, to God that gave them, there to live with him in everlaſting glory; ſo that it is impoſſible for them to come to us, but we muſt all die and our bodies will turn to duſt and if we do well here on earth, God will receive us into his glory, ſo that we muſt go to them, but they will not come to us.

Then

Then ſaid the child, Pray, my dear father, tell me what heaven is?

My dear child, ſays the father, that is a place of endleſs joy and felicity, where Chriſt ſits at the right hand of God, in fulneſs of glory; where there is no ſorrow, no pain or trouble: but all tears are wept away, where the angels and the archangels, and all the company of the heavenly hoſts as ſaints and martyrs, with the holy prophets and apoſtles, with the cherubim and ſeraphim are continually praiſes, hallelujahs, hymns, pſalms and ſpiritual ſongs, unto the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who is God bleſſed for ever and ever.

Then ſaid the child, How do I long to be with God and my brethren—I have often heard and read of hell; pray father tell me what place hell is?

My dear child, ſaid the father, hell is a place of endleſs torment and that miſery, where all thoſe that forſake God's holy laws, and keep not his holy commandments are caſt into ſuch as the drunkard, whoremonger, adulterer, ſwearer, liar, and thoſe that make a mock at God's word without any regard to the rules of the goſpel.

Then the child hearing this, fell on his knees and uttered theſe expreſſions. O my God, I beſeech thee to give me thy grace, and ſo ingraft it into my heart, that I may always tread thoſe paths

paths which lead to eternal life, and this I beg for Jesus Christ his sake——Pray father, said the child, now you have given me an account of the joys of heaven and the torments of hell, I desire you will direct me how I may enjoy one, and escape the other.

My dear child, said the father, I shall do it to my great joy and comfort: To enjoy heaven and happiness you must observe these things. You must beg of God for his saving grace, always minding the goodness of God towards you, you must obey your parents, and observe their counsel; keep to church constant; keep your tongue from evil speaking, from swearing and lying; to be true and just in all your affairs in the world; minding that there is a great God. that can and will punish all such as abuse his favour and goodness; also by reading the scripture often; and if you see your play-fellows do offend God, do not as they do, but keep close toGod, he will never reprove you, nor forsake you.

Then said the child, pray father, is this all I must do to gain heaven?

My dear child, said the father, keep these things, and forget not to be constant and fervent in prayer, then God will certainly reward you with heaven and happiness.

It was observed that this child would not go out of the house to school, or elsewhere, but he would ask God's protection; neither would he eat

eat or drink without craving God's bleſſing thereon. This pious courſe of life he led till the 22d day of November laſt he was taken ill of a fever, and languiſhed till Sunday following.

All the time of his ſickneſs he applied himſelf to prayer, meditation, ejaculation and ſongs of praiſe to the Lord moſt high ſo that it ſeemed as if his ſoul was in heaven, whilſt his body was on earth. His father and relations were ſtanding round his bed, on a ſudden he cried out in a rapture of joy, ſaying, Now my dear father, methinks I hear the ſound of heavenly muſick in my ears, with the voice of angels and archangels, and all the company of the heavenly hoſt calling for me. Then crying out, O Lord, I come, I come! Sweet Jeſus receive my ſpirit; he gave up the ghoſt, to the great grief and diſſatisfaction of his father, and all other friends and relations.

In three days after, all things were prepared for the funeral, and a ſermon preached by the Reverend Mr Jones of the ſaid pariſh, he was interred in a vault with his mother and eleven brethren. His father with grief and trouble was ſo, weak that he could not go home without help, ſo that it pleaſed the miniſter and two other gentlemen to accompany and aſſiſt him to be patient under his affliction, but could not comfort him, ſo that Mr Jones reſolved to lie with him that night, in hopes he ſhould be able to put him out of

of that immoderate ſorrow, but he would often cry out, O my ſon Benjamin, I would to God I was with thee! This would he often cry out, till about twelve o'clock at night. caſting his eyes around, he ſaw the apparition of his ſon, his youngeſt, who turning to his father ſaid, Father as you always foretold me that there is a heavenly reward for the righteous, and a hell to torment the wicked in everlaſting burnings. When my ſpirit took its flight from the body it was immediately tranſlated to ſuch a place of joy, as neither tongue nor pen can expreſs, as you have hereto foretold me; then my guide led me to a place of utter darkneſs, there did I behold the vile ſwearer, drunkard, extortioner, adulterer, and many other heinous ſinners, curſing the day they was born, and the womb that bore them; there the devils were inſulting over them, upbraiding them with their folly; and as ſure as this is true, ſo ſure will you die to-morrow night.

Next day Mr. Worthy and the Rev. Mr. Jones declared the truth of this relation, he ſent for the two church wardens, and gave them a large quantity of corn to be diſtributed amongſt the poor, as their need ſhould require; and ordered all his houſhold goods and hay to be ſold, and the money to be diſtributed to the charitable uſes: left money for a ſermon to be preached one Sunday in every month for ever; and to every tenant he gave a year's rent, and having ſettled his earthly eſtate, he like a juſt ſteward, reſigned himſelf to the will of his heavenly father, and at night, as his ſon had foretold, he gave

gave up the ghoſt. As he lived ſo he died, a true chriſtian, a tender huſband, an indulgent father, a good neighbour, and to the poor a charitable benefactor A ſermon was preached at his funeral; the text was from the 14th chap. of St. Luke, v. 13 and 14. But when thou makeſt a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind, and thou ſhalt be bleſſed for they cannot recompence thee: For thou ſhalt be recompenced at the reſurrection of the juſt. Atteſted by

RICHARD KING, Gentleman.
JAMES CLARK, } Church-wardens.
JOHN ROGERS, }

EPITAPH.

MOURN not my friends for my deceaſe,
For I with Chriſt have made my peace.
Life is uncertain, death is ſure,
Sin gave the wound, and Chriſt the cure.

FINIS.